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Thirteenth annual convention of the National Association of Comptrollers and Accounting Officers, June, 1918. (Detroit, Mich.: J. W. Eisman, City Hall. 1918.)

Capital and Capitalistic Organization

NEW BOOKS

HAUSER, H. *La syndicalisation obligatoire en Allemagne.* (Paris: Tenin. 1919. 3.50 fr.)

JUNG, A. *Die staatliche Elektrizitäts-Grossversorgung Deutschlands.* (Jena: The author. 1918. Pp. vi, 121.)

TWYEFFORT, F. H. *Business corporations in New York.* (Rochester, N. Y.: Lawyers' Coöperative Pub. Co. 1918. Pp. cxliv, 1521. \$10.)

A proposed solution of the gas problem. (Kansas City: Chamber of Commerce. 1918. Pp. 31.)

Report of special committee on government ownership and operation of public utilities. (New York: Merchants' Association of New York. Jan., 1919. Pp. 86.)

In this report the Merchants' Association "reaffirms its resolutions of November, 1916, opposing government ownership and operation of public utilities," on the ground that "governmental methods in the conduct of business affairs are inherently defective by reason of the fundamental restrictions imposed by our form of government, and that such methods are often inefficient and wasteful and therefore unsuited to the conduct of business undertakings."

No attempt is made to prove the case against public ownership by means of an array of statistics; on the contrary, questions of quality of service and of administration are stressed. Throughout, it is premised that "the fields of politics and economics are dissimilar and separate." Political rather than economic considerations largely determine the methods of conducting public business, and the results are found to be unsatisfactory for the following among other reasons:

1. "Political selection produces a personnel poorly qualified for economic service."
2. Executive officials under public control are hampered by rigid legal restrictions.
3. "The financial needs of a public business undertaking are usually not promptly or sufficiently met."
4. There is frequently "wasteful distribution of capital outlays."

After commenting briefly upon some examples of unsuccessful government ownership, the committee concludes that the changed conditions resulting from the war do not alter the basic argument that "political control, operating through political methods, is destructive of economic efficiency, and therefore such control should not be applied to undertakings of an essentially business nature."

It would be difficult to find a better summing up of the arguments

against public ownership as a general proposition. Those who disagree with the conclusions reached will probably be disposed to take a different point of view as to what undertakings are of an "essentially business nature."

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Labor and Labor Organizations

History of Labor in the United States. By JOHN R. COMMONS, DAVID J. SAPOSS, HELEN L. SUMNER, E. B. MITTELMAN, H. E. HOAGLAND, JOHN B. ANDREWS, and SELIG PERLMAN, with an introductory note by HENRY W. FARNAM. (New York: Macmillan Company. 1918. Pp. xxv, 823; xx, 620. \$6.50.)

The publication of these two volumes brings to fruition researches upon which Professor Commons and the members of his seminar at the University of Wisconsin have been engaged for the past twelve years. In 1909-1911, Professor Commons with the cooperation of a number of other scholars published the *Documentary History of American Industrial Society* in eleven volumes, a collection of the more important documents relating to the history of American labor, with accompanying explanatory introductions. The present work traverses much the same ground with the exception that the subjects of slavery and serfdom, to which the first two volumes of the *Documentary History* were largely devoted, are not covered in the *History of Labor*. Frequent references to the *Documentary History* connect the two publications in such a way as to make a single work, the earlier publication serving as a form of documentary appendix.

The treatment adopted is chronological or rather periodic. Each of the six parts thus deals with a single period and each is written by a member of Professor Commons' seminar. Part I, Colonial and Federal Beginnings (to 1827), is by David F. Saposs; part II, Citizenship (1827-1833), by Helen L. Sumner; part III, Trade Unionism (1833-1839), by Edward B. Mittelman; part IV, Humanitarianism (1840-1860), by Henry E. Hoagland; part V, Nationalisation (1860-1877), by John B. Andrews; part VI, Upheaval and Reorganization (since 1876), by Selig Perlman.

It may be said conservatively that each part presents the most complete and authoritative narrative account available of the period with which it deals. There is hardly an important episode in the history of the labor movement which is not set in a new light. Thus, Mr. Saposs' chapters on the events from colonial times to 1827 are distinguished by an illuminating account of the